

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madame Speaker:

Through recent news reports we understand that another version of the expansion and reauthorization of the State Children Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) will soon be up for a vote. We appreciate your apparent willingness to agree to change certain aspects of the latest bill and we respectfully ask that changes are made so a true bipartisan compromise can be reached to help America's children.

As such, we believe there are general principles that will help guide a truly bipartisan approach to reauthorizing this important program to ensure children from families in need are provided with help to have health insurance and access to quality health care.

- **SCHIP legislation should ensure that those children who are in poor and working poor families who currently have coverage through SCHIP will continue to have access to coverage.**
- **Health Insurance should be more accessible for middle class families instead of forcing children out of private health insurance and onto taxpayer funded health care.** Instead of looking at increasing taxes on the poor and using budgetary gimmicks, we should concentrate on making health insurance more accessible through a health insurance tax credit for working class families, so families can have more choices in securing health insurance coverage for their children (recently introduced H.R. 3888, *More Children, More Choices*, has language that we can use for compromise legislation).
- **Americans should not subsidize illegal immigrants' health care.** There must be rock solid proof of citizenship to qualify for taxpayer funded children's health care. As you know, the past two SCHIP bills that passed the House of Representatives did not prevent illegal immigrants from receiving taxpayer funded health care. According to Social Security Commissioner Michael Asture, the past 'verification systems in the Democrat SCHIP bill would not verify citizenship, legal aliens who are not naturalized citizens, or individuals who have illegally overstayed a work visa permit.'
- **SCHIP should be for children only.** In order to prioritize low-income children, childless adults who currently receive SCHIP benefits should be phased-out.

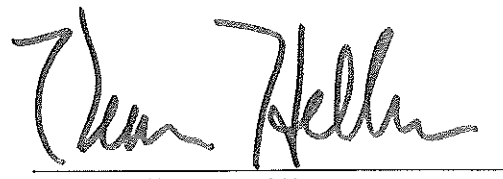
- **There should be ample time (72 hours) to review the legislation.** Since this legislation involves tens of billions of dollars of taxpayers' hard earned money, we should have time to review this legislation to ensure the American taxpayers' money is well spent. Before you were elected Speaker of the House, you said, "The Democrats intend to lead the most honest, most open, and most ethical Congress in history." Giving members of Congress ample time to read a several hundred page bill will enable you to meet your standard.
- **Make sure children in the lowest income levels are insured first.** We would like to see language that at least 90 percent of children who are at or below 200% (\$41,000 for a family of four) of the federal poverty line are covered before any waiver is granted.
- **Finally, our hope is that future SCHIP legislation will not harm our seniors.** This can be done by not reducing access to prescribed oxygen equipment and wheelchairs for our senior citizens; and by not harming our home health care services, nursing facilities, and inpatient rehabilitation services, like in one of the previous SCHIP bills passed through the House.

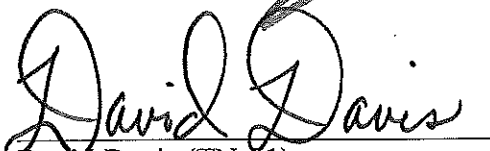
Congress has the unique opportunity to improve the foundation of the SCHIP program to make it even more effective. We can do better than simply making taxpayers pay a huge bill to move millions of children from private health insurance to government health care. While upholding our inherent promise to assist the poorest of children, we seek common ground to help children already covered under SCHIP and to make private health insurance more affordable and accessible for 10.5 million children. At the same time, we also encourage the testing of new health care solutions for the remainder of America's uninsured.

We look forward to working with you to ensure our nation's neediest children are receiving the health care they deserve in a fashion that places choice in the hands of those that are most suited to make this decision - the families of these children.

Sincerely,


Tim Walberg (MI-07)


Dean Heller (NV-02)


David Davis (TN-01)


Mary Fallin (OK-05)